

## Geographical Mobility, 1998-99

**Migration is a basic component of population growth and decline.**

In search of economic opportunity, better climate, cheaper living, or locations nearer their loved ones, migrants swell the population of one area while diminishing the population of another. In hopes of finding clues about future population growth or decline, the U.S. Census Bureau studies the patterns of relocation.

**Forty-three million people or 16 percent of the population aged 1 and older living in the United States moved between March 1998 and March 1999.**

Recent moving rates have changed only moderately from one year to the next, but there has been an overall drop of about 4 percentage points since the 1950s and 1960s, according to the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Fifty-nine percent of the 43 million people who moved between March 1998 and March 1999 moved from one residence to a different residence in that same county. The next largest share of movers (20 percent) stayed within a state, but moved to a different county. About 18 percent moved between states and 3 percent moved into the United States from abroad.

Young adults were the most likely to move. During the study period, 32 percent of 20- to 29-year-olds moved, compared with 23 percent of people aged 30 to 34 and 14 percent of people aged 35 to 44. The rates

declined to 10 percent for those aged 45 to 54, 7 percent for those aged 55 to 64, and 4 percent for those aged 65 and older.

Renters have vastly higher mobility rates than homeowners. Between 1998 and 1999, 1 in every 3 people living in a rental unit made a move, compared with 1 in every 12 people living in an owner-occupied dwelling. On average, renters are younger than homeowners. While half of all people in renter-occupied housing were aged 28 or older, half of those in owner-occupied housing were aged 35 years or older.

**People in the West and South moved more frequently than the national average, according to the Current Population Survey.**

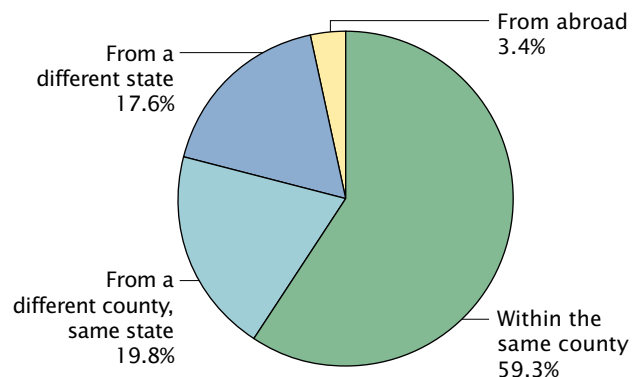
In March 1999, about 19 percent of Westerners and 17 percent of Southerners were living at a different address than they did the year before. People living in the Midwest at the time of the survey were less likely than the average American to have relocated during the year. About 15 percent were in a different location

Figure 3-1.

**Movers by Type of Move: 1998-99**

(Percent distribution of movers aged 1 and older)

Total movers = 42.6 million

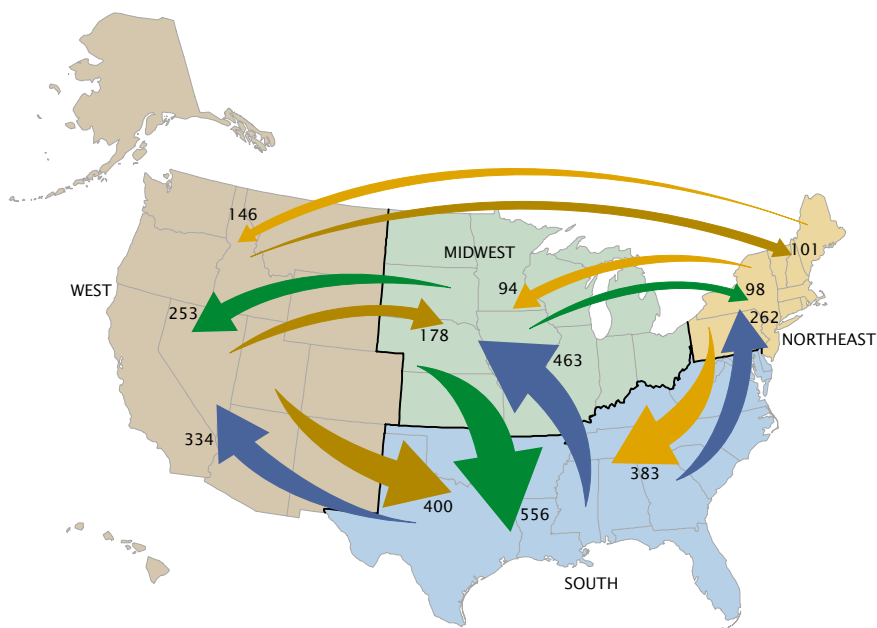


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

**Words That Count**

- **Movers** are all people aged 1 and older who were living in a different residence at the time of the March Current Population Survey than they were 1 year earlier.

Figure 3-2.  
**Region-to-Region Migration: 1998-99**  
 (Numbers in thousands)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

outmigrants. The exceptions were 1992-93 and 1995-96 when metropolitan areas experienced net losses. Metropolitan areas have not had a net gain since 1986-87, when the increase was nearly half a million people.

However, when movers from abroad were taken into account, metropolitan areas experienced a significant net gain of about 1.3 million people between 1998 and 1999. Within metropolitan areas, central cities experienced a net loss due to internal migration while the areas outside central cities gained. The apparent gain in nonmetropolitan areas was not significantly different from zero.

than they were in March 1998. However, only 12 percent of people in the Northeast had a new address — the least of any region.

Migration flows within the United States produced significant population losses in both the Northeast and the Midwest between 1998 and 1999. About 163,000 more people left the Northeast than moved there. And 171,000 more people left the Midwest than moved there. With a 270,000-person gain, the South was the only region of the country to experience a significant population gain due to internal migration. The net internal migration for the West, 63,000, was not significantly different than zero. However, when movers from abroad were taken into account, both the South and West experienced significant population gains. The Northeast and Midwest had just enough movers from abroad to offset their net migration losses domestically.

For most of the 1990s, metropolitan areas as a whole maintained a balance between internal inmigrants and

## The Census Bureau Can Tell You More

- For more information, consult the following U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Report: *Geographical Mobility: March 1998 to March 1999 (Update)* by Carol S. Faber.
- Look for complete reports and detailed tables on the Census Bureau's World Wide Web site [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Click on "G" and select "Geographic Mobility."
- Contact the Journey to Work and Migration Statistics Branch of the U.S. Census Bureau at 301-457-2454 or e-mail [pop@census.gov](mailto:pop@census.gov).
- For information on publications and other resources, see Appendix A.